

It's Not Your Fault

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Fandoms:	Fullmetal Alchemist: Brotherhood & Manga , Fullmetal Alchemist - All Media Types , Fullmetal Alchemist (Anime 2003)
Relationships:	No Romantic Relationship(s) , but maybe slight , Riza Hawkeye/Roy Mustang , Edward Elric & Roy Mustang , Edward Elric & Riza Hawkeye & Roy Mustang , Edward Elric & Riza Hawkeye , Alphonse Elric & Edward Elric , Edward Elric/Original Male Character
Characters:	Edward Elric , Alphonse Elric , Roy Mustang , Riza Hawkeye , Original Character
Additional Tags:	Rape Aftermath , Implied/Referenced Sexual Assault , Sexual Harassment , Sexual Assault , Past Sexual Assault , Self-Harm , Cutting , Pedophilia , Parental Roy Mustang , Parental Riza Hawkeye , I may yet have a sequel for ed and Al to talk things out , but currently it is a oneshot , Oneshot , PTSD , Trauma , Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder - PTSD , Angst , Hurt/Comfort , Emotional Hurt/Comfort , Angst and Hurt/Comfort , Angst and Feels , Sad , Emotional Manipulation , Emotional/Psychological Abuse , Manipulation , Sexual Manipulation , confusing feelings , conflicting emotions , Unhealthy Coping Mechanisms , Coping , ALSO SOME MOMENTS IN THIS ARE VERY AWKWARD , BUT IT'S ONLY BECAUSE THAT'S HOW ED IS PERCEIVING THINGS DUE TO THE TRAUMA , THIS IS ALSO KIND OF A RUSH JOB SO IT SUCKS , also , ed has to get a physical so that is part of what made it so awkward , this isn't meant as Royed in anyway shape or form , but boy did i do a fine job at not making it weird af , rushjob , awful shit , i hate this , The Author Regrets Everything , Stockholm Syndrome , or something like it , gaining fond feelings for one's abuser , sexual assaulter , ventfic , venting , vent - Freeform
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It's Not Your Fault

by [karinakamichi](#)

Summary

This isn't your fault." Riza repeated herself yet again, putting emphasis on it.

"And I'm telling you it is...!" Edward argued back.

"No, it's not!" Both Riza and Roy said, in unison this time.

"When he first started touching me, I kept trying to tell myself that maybe I really did like him, just to rationalize it... But when he started getting more intimate, it became too much to handle and I..." Edward put his hand over the now bandaged cuts on his arm, clutching at it.

They knew what he was hinting at without him directly even saying it.

A very personal(although incredibly rushed and badly written) one shot that explores the trauma of pedophilia, sexual assault and rape, the self-blame that comes along with it. Based heavily on my own experiences, so it may seem slightly out of character. In my case, I was 15-16, autistic, and couldn't stand up for myself, and he was over 40 years old, so it made everything all the harder for me. It just started happening, there was no trigger or anything, so that is what I tried to get across in this. Also, no, this story is not meant as RoyEd, but it has moments where Ed assumes things that are not the case(PTSD).

It started off with mere brushes of the skin that he preferred to ignore, telling himself it was just accidents. But it slowly became more to where the man would touch his backside in passing. Edward honestly didn't know what to think when it happened, but he still continued trying to ignore it. He had other things to focus on anyway.

One day, however, the guy followed the boy into the bathroom. Edward felt himself freeze up as the man came up from behind him, wrapping his arms around him.

"Hello, Ed." *Ian* purred into his ear, sending a chill up his spine. He felt sick to his stomach, hearing the man refer to him so casually.

"...Ng... H-Hello, Brigadier General Ian." He cursed himself for stuttering, but it had caught him off guard. He had always liked to act like the tough guy, but, suddenly, he realized just how little control he really had over things. His entire being screamed for him to pull away, but, despite his discomfort, he couldn't bring himself to move.

...

Over the weeks, it continued getting worse.

And he could never express his true thoughts. He couldn't just say, *"I'm not okay with you touching me like this; please stop."*

Instead he sometimes ended up giving off the opposite impression, and some people in the military started noticing. They noticed the way the man looked at him, they noticed how Ed did nothing to stop it.

...

At some point, Ian had slowly become a bit possessive. When Edward went off on trips and assignments for anymore than a week, Ian would always approach him and start talking about how much he had missed him and how he had worried. Edward didn't know what to think. It was honestly kind of suffocating, but still he never spoke up about it. Sometimes, he even

played along just so Ian would drop the matter, because it made him feel incredibly uncomfortable.

...

At some point, *Ian* started sitting next to him in the cafeteria, offering to cover his meals.

Edward didn't know what to think about all the attention that the brigadier general was giving him, but a free meal was a free meal, so he thanked him and accepted it graciously.

...

Naturally, rumors had started spreading in hushed whispers, while others would outright ask him:

"Are you two together or something?"

"No, it's nothing like that!" Edward would lie. "We're just good friends is all."

He felt the obligation to hide the truth; to hide everything Ian had been doing to him behind closed doors. He felt the need to *protect* him.

After all, Edward reasoned, it was his own fault for leading the man on, for making him think he felt the same and not being strong enough to just say no to him. *It's my problem to deal with, not anybody else's. There's no reason to get anybody else involved.*

On top of that, he couldn't really even hate Ian. Although he didn't like being touched by him, Ian had never hit him and Edward couldn't help but feel like he wasn't that bad of a person. Something inside of him didn't even *want* to get him in trouble.

...

After a few months, people started advising Edward to stay away from Ian, but he already felt trapped in the matter, and the whispered rumors weren't helping any at all. People were saying things about him being a "whore", and that he was probably selling his body for information or something, while others were saying that Ian was a pedophile and that he was praying on an innocent child. Edward choice-fully didn't try to correct any of them. There was no point in even trying to deny it. He was disgusting and he had allowed it to go on for months, but it was too late to back down from it now.

Even so a part of him still was stressed by the whole ordeal.

He couldn't break off contact with the guy and leave the military because he still had his promise to Alphonse to keep. He needed the resources that only they could offer.

So that only made him feel worse.

...

"If I ever do anything that makes you feel uncomfortable, just tell me." Ian said once in while, as he started to reach up Edward's shirt and into his pants, touching him in ways that honestly just made the boy want to rip his own skin open.

And, still, Edward did not speak up, *couldn't* speak up, even when it reached the stage of kissing.

...

Kissing was by far the most tedious and unpleasant thing he had done with him. The man's breath quite frankly smelled awful and he hated every minute of it.

...

Within weeks, he had got to a point that he had learned how to detach himself. He just allowed the man to do whatever he wanted, sometimes acting like he was into it just to appease him, but in reality, he wanted to die.

...

“I would never do anything to hurt you.”

...

“You have beautiful eyes.”

...

“You’re so cute.”

...

“It makes me so happy that you don’t mind me touching you like this...”

...

“I love you...”

...

Things eventually got so bad that Edward started cutting himself to deal with it all. At first, it started off as simple scratching, and originally, he didn't do it much, just enough to ease his mind a bit.

But, unfortunately, it didn't take long before even *that* wasn't enough to distract himself from it all, and it got to a point that he did it every night, slashing into his skin to feel alive yet detached at the same time.

And it helped a little, at least for a while.

That was until things got much, much worse.

...

"You called for me?" Edward inquired, gazing at the Flame Alchemist who seemed to be looking over his figure. Edward blushed a little, and looked away. He didn't feel comfortable with being gazed upon like some fancy vase. Ian already did enough of that.

He had been brought here to Roy's office by Riza, but he still had yet to receive an actual explanation as to why.

"...You seem to have gotten thinner. Have you been eating properly?" Roy asked, his tone stern as ever, and yet, there was an edge of concern weighing in his voice.

"That's none of your business. What do you want?" Edward retorted, not liking where this conversation was going. It was true, he hadn't been eating all that well, he couldn't stomach much of anything anymore, but his weight was none of that *bastard's* concern.

Roy and Riza briefly met each other's gazes, before Roy spoke. However, the words that came out of Roy's mouth brought Edward's anxiety back worse than ever:

"There's been a lot of rumors going around Central about you as of late, particularly in relation to Brigadier General Ian..." The man's expression was unreadable as he eyed the boy. "Know anything about that?"

Edward tensed up, looking down and avoiding eye contact. “No... Why?”

In truth, he had heard the rumors so many times it had only increased his self-hatred, but he chose to play ignorant, although his act honestly wasn't going smoothly at all. There was practically guilt written all over his face.

“Why? I don't know. *You tell me*, Ed. I've been hearing quite a *few* different stories on the matter, actually. Like, for instance, fraternization?” Roy studied the way he was fidgeting with his sleeve. Riza stood by Roy's side, listening and observing, but choosing not to get involved in the conversation for the time being.

Edward had no apparent response. He was at a loss for words. In truth, he wanted to tell them, he wanted to spill out everything, but, instead he bit his lip nervously. The cuts on his arm beneath his sleeves began to itch.

If he told them, they would be disgusted in him. He himself sure was. Roy would just remind him that it was all his fault for being so damn weak in the first place. Even though he knew that was true, he didn't want to be reminded of it, least of all by the shithead Colonel.

“To be honest, I'm not usually the type to care much about those kinds of things, I'd usually just ignore it. After all, your love life is your own business, kid. But, seeing as there's more to it than just that, I can't very well just let it slide.” Roy stated as a matter of factly. “What really concerns me is that not only are you underage, but there are also claims that he is taking advantage of you.”

As soon as the suspicion was voiced, Edward sank further in on himself. He wasn't being “taken advantage of”. It was he himself who was to blame for leading Ian on. Ian genuinely believed he returned his feelings.

Riza walked over, placing a gentle hand Edward's shoulder. “Ed..., has the Brigadier General ever done anything that made you feel uncomfortable...? It's okay to say if he has... You can be honest with us.”

Edward's throat felt swollen, but he forced himself to speak. "...Nothing's going on between us..."

His voice was barely above a whisper and naturally Riza wasn't convinced, nor was Roy.

Once again, they cast each other a glance.

"Fullmetal, if he's hurting you-" Roy started to say.

"I said it's nothing, so just drop it!" Edward shouted without thinking, interrupting him. He felt his shoulders shaking, his heart beating rapidly in his chest, as he bolted for the door.

"Wait, Ed-" Riza started to go after him, until Roy stopped her.

"Let him go." He said, barely above a whisper.

"But, sir..." Hawkeye wanted to protest.

"...It's obvious he's hiding something, but without proof, there isn't much we can do..." Roy mused.

Roy and Riza deeply cared for both of the brothers and so it infuriated both of them to think that Edward was going through such a horrible thing, that he was trying to shoulder everything alone.

They only wished that Edward would trust in them a little more.

...

A few days later, things with Ian got as far as they could have, and Edward wanted to throw up.

He was unable to bring himself to turn down Ian's sudden invitation to go to his house that night, and he could only blame himself for what transpired.

"When somebody wants to love on you, let them, you don't have to think, just let it happen." Ian had said to him.

Edward wanted more than anything to forget it all. To forget the pain, forget the shame, to forget the disgust he felt in himself. He wanted to forget just how weak he was, but he couldn't.

"No regrets." Ian had smiled at him afterwards. Edward had tried to tell himself that maybe a part of him enjoyed it, if only to normalize what was even happening to him. He forced himself to endure the pain, he pretended to like it because it was what Ian wanted. He just then realized he was scared.

Above all, he had lost something he could never get back.

I want to die.

...

"Brother, you're late and you're limping. What happened?" Alphonse asked, concern in his voice.

"I kind of fell earlier is all." Edward scratched back of his head. He forced a smile convincing enough that Alphonse bought it. "It's nothing big though, don't worry about it."

“You’re so clumsy sometimes, Ed... You should try to be more careful.” Alphonse said, suddenly sounding more like the older brother than even Ed himself.

“Right. Sorry about that, Al.” Edward smiled sheepishly, despite the overwhelming guilt he was feeling for lying to his Brother about such a thing. But he could never know the truth. He didn’t need to. It would just cause him and everybody else unnecessary worry.

...

Naturally, Alphonse wasn’t the only one who noticed the fact that Edward was limping. Riza also took note of it, almost immediately.

“Good morning, boys.”

Edward turned towards the familiar voice, followed by Alphonse. “Mornin’, Lieutenant.”

“Good morning, Lieutenant Hawkeye.” Alphonse would have been smiling if he had a body.

“How are you two doing this morning? I noticed that you were limping, Ed. Did something happen?” Riza asked.

“Ah, well, Edward smiled a little anxiously before deciding to tell her the same thing he had told Alphonse.” I kind of fell yesterday and hurt my leg. It should be okay in a few days, though.”

“I told him he should be more careful. Honestly, I can’t even leave him alone for five seconds without him getting himself in trouble.” Alphonse said. For a brief moment, there was a look of pain or guilt(?) in Edward’s eyes, which vanished almost as soon as it came. However, it most certainly didn’t go unnoticed by Riza.

“You’re exaggerating a little there, aren’t you? It was several hours.” Edward pointed out with no serious arguments.

“Come to think of it, you never even told me where you were last night.” Alphonse thought aloud.

This caught Riza's attention.

Edward's eyes flashed to the side, for a second before he thought up a lie. "Course I did, Al. Remember? I told you I went to the park."

"No, you didn't!" Alphonse retorted. "You only told me that you fell!"

"Hey, it's not my fault that you forgot!" Edward feigned ignorance.

"I didn't forget anything! You just never tell me stuff like this!" Alphonse argued back.

Riza was on Alphonse's side of this matter, and although she wasn't planning to bring it up right now, she didn't believe a single word Edward was saying. It was too obvious that he was forcing himself.

"However, she knew she needed to get the paperwork in her arms delivered before anything else, so she decided to dismiss herself. However, as soon as she started to speak up, another voice cut them both off.

"Hello, Ed. How are you doing this morning?"

Edward felt his heart sink at hearing his voice. He visibly flinched, not going unnoticed by Riza and Alphonse, before he forced himself to smile.

"Ah, Brigadier General Ian, Good morning. I'm doing fine. How about you?"

"I'm doing well. Ah, you must be Alphonse, Ed's younger brother!" Ian looked over at Alphonse. "I've seen you around, and heard all about you, but it's nice to finally be able to meet you."

“Oh, you as well.” Alphonse replied sheepishly, as he shook his hand. Yet, he couldn’t help but get an uneasy feeling, remembering the way Edward had reacted when he came over.

That’s when a sudden meow came from his suit of armor.

“Alphonse?” Edward scrutinized him, inquiring for an explanation.

“Um... Wait, I can explain! You see, it was raining outside, and the cat was cold and wet, so I had to pick him up...!” Alphonse stammered.

Edward sighed, not even wanting to waste much energy scolding him in the end. He didn’t feel up to it, not after the extra stress yesterday. Besides, even after all this time, Alphonse still hadn’t changed. Scolding him would do no good. His brother would never change.

“I believe it stopped raining a short while ago.” Riza mused aloud.

“Oh it did? Guess I’ll have to bring it back out then...” Alphonse felt dejected, but knew that in the long run, cats preferred freedom.

“Oh, Edward, that reminds me,” Riza suddenly recalled something. “The Colonel asked me to tell you that he needs to see you for your yearly physical later today.”

Edward’s eyes widened. He’d forgotten. Every year, the military required a physical exam to update bodily marks, scars, and other things related for up-to-date documentation as well as to make sure that everybody was in top shape.

“Oh, r-right. I guess I forgot.” He unintentionally stuttered. *Great.*

What was he going to do about the cuts?

If Roy found out and thought he was a danger to himself, then he'd be locked up in some stupid mental institution for sure, and more than likely he'd also have his state license revoked. Roy would likely insult and berate him and call him weak, and more importantly, *Alphonse* would find out, something he wanted desperately to prevent at all costs.

Ian was the only person who had seen them, showing what appeared to be concern, telling him that he could always talk to him, and it made Edward feel nauseated.

Additionally, having another person look at his naked body like Ian had looked at him the night before... It terrified him. What if Roy got the same ideas that Ian got? Even though he and Roy had their differences, there was a part of Edward that really respected and trusted Roy, so he would be lying if he said he wasn't afraid of that trust and admiration being taken advantage of by him. He could never truly read Roy, after all.

And yet, if he wanted to keep his license, complying was his only option. Hell, Ian could probably revoke his license if he wanted to, maybe that was part of what helped contribute to making him so intimidating and one reason it was so hard for him to stand up to him. Or maybe he was just weak.

"Looks like I'll have to go there shortly... Even though I'd rather not see that bastard's face right now." Edward groaned, trying his best to ignore Ian standing beside him.

"In that case, I think I'll go to the library today to see if there are any books that will be of any use to us." Alphonse decided.

"Okay, see you later, Al." Edward replied, even though a small part of him wanted to beg his brother to stay. He didn't want to be alone with Ian right now.

"Alright, be nice to the Colonel, Ed." Alphonse added.

"Why should I? That guy sucks." Edward pouted. To be honest, he was still kind of pissed at Mustang for getting into his business about Ian, and he was kind of worried that that was going to get brought up again. What if he let something slip? He was starting to find it harder

and harder to lie about things around him. And when Mustang was determined to get information, he always won in the end.

But how would he react to finding out the truth? He would be disgusted, surely.

“I would like to stay longer to chat, but unfortunately, I need to deliver this paperwork to the Colonel.” Riza said. “He wants you to be there in about thirty minutes.”

“Alright, thanks.” Edward acknowledged, although a small part of him wanted to go with her or for her to stay. He could already feel Ian’s eyes on him and just waiting to be alone with him and touch him again.

As Ian’s hand brushed against his back, his arms began itching again, even though he had already torn himself open that day, just hours before.

As Riza began to walk off, she heard Ian whisper something to Edward that sent a chill up her spine:

“I really enjoyed the time we spent together yesterday. It was nice having you all to myself for the evening.”

“Mn... Yeah.” Edward uttered, weakly, it clearly lacked certainty.

Riza then remembered that Edward was limping.

He had claimed it was due to a fall, but...

She froze in her spot, realization hitting her.

Oh, my god. He...

She decided she needed to talk to Roy about this again. Edward was just a *child*. This had been going on for far too long, and it had clearly got out of hand. The thought of Ian laying his filthy hands on the boy infuriated her, but she knew she had to remain cordial.

Even so, she didn't feel comfortable with leaving Edward alone with the man, so she decided she'd have to make up some excuse to pull him aside. After all, the blonde was obviously uncomfortable, it was so painfully obvious in both his facial expression and body language.

"Um, Edward, do you mind coming with me for a bit? There's something I could use your help with." she said.

"Oh, sure." Edward smiled a bit, more than happy to have an excuse to get away from him. Ian didn't look too pleased with the turn of events, but he let him go nonetheless.

...

"So what is it you wanted me to help you with, Lieutenant?" Edward asked. Riza had been rather silent for a while now and hadn't given him much explanation.

"There's some misplaced files in the Archive that I could use your help organizing. You don't mind, do you?"

"No, I don't mind, but is that really the type of job for somebody like me?" Edward smirked. In reality, he didn't mind, it was better than having somebody breathe down his neck, after all, but it still surprised him a little.

"The person who usually takes care of it is Sheska, but she's been out sick for the past few days." Riza explained.

"Oh, I see. I hope she starts to feel better soon." Edward mused.

“I do too.” Riza said.

“If you see her, tell her I said hello.” Edward smiled again.

“Of course, I’ll remember that.” Riza returned the gesture in kind.

...

“I’ll be back here shortly.” Riza announced. “Stay in here until then, okay? And keep the door locked.”

“Alright.” Edward said, already looking through some of the files.

...

“Colonel, I have more paperwork for you.” Riza said as she came into Roy’s office.

“Colonel...?” Riza repeated as she walked over to his desk to see that he had fallen asleep.

Sighing, she slammed down the stack of papers in her arms onto the surface of the desk near his face.

“H-huh?” He jumped up with a jolt, before squinting his bloodshot eyes for a second. He hadn’t been getting good rest and Riza could tell that just by looking at him and at the bags under his eyes.

“Lieutenant...?” He inquired, sitting back down.

“Glad to see you finally awoke, sir. I have more paperwork for you to fill out.”

“Great.” Roy deadpanned. “You’re a slave-driver, you know that...?”

“You wouldn’t have me any other way, sir.” Riza replied wryly. “Also, whenever you’re ready, I can bring Edward here for his physical. I have him currently organizing papers in the Archive.”

“Physical? Ah, right...” Roy muttered in realization, trying to rub the sleep from his eyes to not much avail. He had already done a physical on all of his other men, Edward was the only one left. “Hold on, isn’t organizing folders one of Sheska’s jobs...?”

“It is, but she’s had to call in sick over the past few days.” Riza informed him.

“Is that so...” Roy noted.

“Also, about Edward, there’s something that’s bothering me, sir...” Riza said in a low voice.

Roy looked up at her. “What is it?”

Riza thought for a second about how to word her concerns, but decided to be blunt in the end. “Edward was limping earlier. He claimed it was due to some kind of fall, but when I was walking off, I overheard Brigadier General Ian implying that he and Edward had been alone together yesterday.”

Roy’s eyes were alert now, as the implications of what she was saying sunk in. Anger filled his entire being, but he forced himself to calm down. “...I see... Thank you for telling me. I’ll try to press him to talk about it again after I’ve finished filling out his physical papers.”

Although a part of him hoped that Edward would open up about it all, he knew how stubborn the state alchemist could be especially with him.

“Right...” Riza uttered. “If you can’t get him to talk, I can try again.”

“I’ll be sure to keep that in mind. Speaking of which, I want you to stand outside the door in case something happens or he tries to run off again.” Things needed to be confronted once and for all and Roy refused to allow himself to make the same mistake he had last time. He didn’t even know why he had allowed things to go on as long as he had.

“Understood.”

...

Roy immediately noticed the limp that Riza had referred to when Edward walked into the room, and he tried his best to hold back his anger towards Ian for the time being. So he put on a smile. “Ah, Fullmetal, I’m glad you could make it. And for once you’re not late, all thanks to my trusty Lieutenant.”

Edward didn’t even look at him.

“Whatever, let’s just get this over with already.” he muttered, as Riza stepped out of the room to leave them to it.

Roy couldn’t notice how Ed gave a look of apprehension on his face in that moment, like he was scared of something. Once again, however, Roy told himself not to question it for the time being. At the very least, he wanted to get these papers filled out before Ed decided to try to run off.

“Alright.” Roy said, standing up. “I’m sure you know how these procedures work, but I need you to take off everything except for your boxers.

A small part of Edward felt relief at hearing that he wasn’t going to have to get *completely* naked this time around. But it still didn’t ease his mind much, since he was still the center of attention and he couldn’t help but tense up when Roy rolled down the window blinds, just like Ian had -

“Fullmetal, is there a problem?” Roy interrupted his thoughts, startling him. Edward had already taken off his red coat and shoes, but he stopped when he reached the button on his shirt.

The man’s voice wasn’t condescending, but still, Edward couldn’t speak. He looked down, letting his bangs shadow his eyes. In the end, it wasn’t nearly as easy to go through with as he wanted to envision. Roy could see that Edward was beginning to shut down, just like he had when Ian got brought up.

“Ed...” Roy used his nickname without thinking about it. He had approached the boy, reaching out to place a hand on his shoulder, but was stunned when Edward didn’t even try to slap away his hand like he probably would have normally, instead pulling in on himself like he was afraid of being being hurt.

“Easy, kid, I’m not going to hurt you...” Roy forced himself to say, although his words felt odd on his mouth, since he was not usually put in the position of reassuring Edward. That was Alphonse’s and Riza’s job. If only one of them could have done this physical for him instead. It would have made his job a lot easier.

Edward looked up at him, distrustfully, but his eyes seemed to soften ever so slightly. However, he looked down and didn’t budge. He almost looked guilty about something.

Roy sighed. “Look, Ed... I don’t want to be here any more than you do... So try to work with me here. The faster we get this done, the quicker we’ll be able to put this behind us.”

Edward wanted to speak, but the words wouldn’t come. They just got in his throat, forming a lump.

“Fine, if you can’t do it, then I’ll do it *for* you.” Roy hadn’t wanted to use force, but in the end, it looked like Edward wasn’t giving him much of a choice, so reaching out, he grabbed him by the arm, causing him to hiss when the fabric scraped against his cuts.

Roy almost lost his resolve when the boy cursed in pain. Was his arm hurt? Had Ian been hitting him as well?

“Let me go!” Edward pleaded, everything finally coming to the surface, tears welling up in his eyes as flashes of the night before plagued his mind. He had long since accepted Ian doing those kind of things to him, but he didn’t want Roy to do the same too. More than anything, the man was almost like a father to him in many ways, he *trusted* him, so the notion of being touched by him in such a way terrified him.

But Roy couldn’t do that now. He had to see. He had to know just how bad the damage was. Just how badly Ian had hurt his subordinate, who might as well be like a son to him, although he would never in his entire life admit it out loud. The urge to *burn* Ian for daring to lay his filthy hand on one of his men started to intensify at seeing how scared Ed looked.

He didn’t want to do this, he really *didn’t*, but he wasn’t about to let Edward risk losing his state certification due to his unwillingness to cooperate with him over a mere physical exam, so with that thought in mind, against Edward’s wishes, he finally worked both of the boy’s shirts off, trying to ignore the way his ribs seemed to be protruding from his skin(It was not off base when he thought he had lost weight).

And it was in that moment that Roy froze in his spot.

Although the majority of Ed’s flesh arm was covered in bandages, one bandage had loosened, most likely due to the scuffle they had just had. Although Edward was quick to push it back up, he wasn’t quick enough to stop him from seeing them.

“What were those...?” Roy asked. It didn’t take a fool to know what Edward was hiding, that he had numerous gashes all over his arm, obviously self-inflicted, but he wanted the kid to say it himself.

“...” Edward suddenly felt like his shoulders were too heavy for his body to withstand, his legs felt weak and he couldn’t speak, his heart pounding in his chest.

He was gonna lose his license. Alphonse was going to find out. Roy and Riza would be disgusted with him. He would make Winry cry again. Everything was turning upside down and he couldn't breathe.

"Answer me, Fullmetal, I just asked you a question!" Roy said, a bit of panic seeping through his voice.

Edward was too panicked himself to notice it though.

"Edward..." Roy uttered, painfully feeling at a loss when Edward refused to speak. The thought that this child had been tearing his own skin to pieces tortured him in ways he never could have perceived were possible. Without even thinking, he pulled him into an embrace. At first Edward, tensed up, but after a moment he seemed to relax some.

Edward didn't know what to think, his commanding officer(Roy, of all people!) was... hugging him? Why? Wasn't he disgusted? Was he about to- What if he-

"This is because of Ian, *isn't* it...?" Roy inquired, preventing his thought process from going down a much darker path. "This is how you've been coping with it..."

"No... I told you nothing's going on between us." Edward denied it, but his voice was far too weak for his liking.

"Bullshit..." Roy choked out. "Ever since that bastard started associating with you, you've been closing yourself off, and staring off into space a lot lately. I'm not the only one, others have noticed it too, and... you grow tense at any kind of physical contact. And now you're limping the day after he was alone with you. I may shirk off responsibilities sometimes when it comes to my paperwork, but I'm not an idiot and nor am I blind."

Edward sunk in on himself, without a single argument, only serving to confirm Roy's suspicions.

The only reason he had put it off so long and left things as they were was because he wanted to believe that Ian was an upstanding man, that he wouldn't do something like that. He wanted to believe that maybe it wasn't what him or anybody else was saying, that it wasn't what he thought. Above all, he choicefully ignored it and let the rumors slide, because he didn't want to interfere with Edward's life, because he was sure the boy could handle it if it

got bad enough, that he would stand up to him and that Ian would respect his boundaries. But now that he had turned a blind eye to the matter, Edward had been-

This is all my fault...

“...After we finish your physical, I’m going to have the Lieutenant rebandage your injuries. I need to assess the damage.”

Edward didn’t respond.

...

“Lieutenant, I need your help with something. Can you come back in here?” Roy called out in a low voice, peeking out his room door.

“Of course, what is it, sir?” She asked, following him inside.“

“...Fullmetal has been hurting himself... I have a first aid kit, but I think he’d be more comfortable with you tending to his wounds.” Roy explained, a little awkwardly.

“I see...” She murmured.

...

Riza didn’t know how to react when she saw the lacerations covering Edward’s flesh arm - A lot of them were just so deep and so fresh - quite a few of them had clearly been inflicted within the past five or six hours. She was no expert and she certainly wasn’t a doctor, but she could tell that he’d probably lost a fair amount of blood from it. He *had* seemed kind of pale lately and the blood loss could have explained that, on top of the fact that he looked far too thin for comfort.

“Edward, I’m going to bandage your cuts... You don’t mind, do you...?” She kneeled down in front of him at the couch, holding the first aid that Roy had handed her.

“...No, ‘s fine...” Edward spoke, barely above a whisper. He felt sick, he needed to leave. Aside from last night, he had never felt so vulnerable before in his life. They had found out everything that he had desperately been trying to hide for *months*.

What were they thinking right now...?

Edward flinched as she started dabbing something cold and wet onto some of the injuries. “What is that...?”

“It’s saline, it’s used to clean injuries. But it’s basically water, so it shouldn’t sting too bad.” Riza said softly. Roy was standing next to the couch, observing them. Both him and Riza were feeling incredibly guilty right now. Did Edward really not think he could trust them? How could nobody have noticed this sooner?

As she began to dry his cuts, she decided maybe it would be better to distract him a bit. “You like to read, don’t you?”

“Huh?” Edward seemed a bit taken aback by the question, but decided to go with it, blushing slightly. “Yeah, a little.”

“I hear you and your brother are going up to the library a lot. Aside from Alchemy stuff, what kind of books do you like?” Riza asked.

“Well, I guess I kind of like sci-fi...” Edward pondered it. “Al is more into romance novels and stuff. I keep telling him he doesn’t have to read Alchemy books with me, but he insists on helping me find a way to get our bodies back. Though he does have an interest in science too, like me, so...”

“Do you ever read any comics...?” Riza asked him.

“Yeah, me and Al both. There are some really interesting comic books from Xing out there. They’re totally different than Amestrian comics and in my opinion they’re actually better. It’s called Mànhuà or something, but Al knows a lot more about it than I do.” Edward said, with a genuine smile on his face.

“You and your brother must have read a lot of comics as kids.” Riza noted. How could somebody ever want to hurt such a gentle boy like this. Even though Edward could be a little rough around the edges, once you got to know, he was actually really sweet, just like his brother.

“Yeah, we actually did. Winry never cared for them much, though... She always used to nag at us for it. She always wanted us to play with her dolls, if she wasn’t tinkering with that dumb automail stuff of hers. Al always went along with it to be nice, but I never liked them. Sometimes, we would even fight over who Al played with...” Edward laughed a little, before his face sunk a little and his bangs began shadowing his eyes. “But ever since Mom died, we’ve never really had the time to focus on stuff like that any more, especially not after he lost his body...”

Roy and Riza shared a brief glance and before Riza could speak up again, Edward beat her to it.

“...Please don’t tell Al about this... He already has enough to deal with right now... And I don’t want to worry him. *All* of you have more important things to be doing right now, so there’s really no need to worry about me...”

“Is that why you didn’t tell us,” Roy suddenly asked, eyeing him. “about Ian?”

Edward was silent for a long time, and for a moment neither one of them expected the boy to speak, but he finally did.

“It’s my problem to deal with,” Edward reasoned. “there’s no need to get anybody else involved. I was weak, end of story.”

This was where both of them drew the line.

“Edward, you are *not* weak.” Riza told him. “None of this is your fault. You’re underage, and you lack the experience of relationships. Furthermore, I could tell that you were uncomfortable around him, but he had no concern for you or your feelings. Even if it had been the Fuhrer himself, nobody has a right to right to lay their hand on you and force you to do something that you don’t want to.”

“But he didn’t force me into anything. I just... couldn’t tell him to stop... He...” Edward trailed off into silence for a moment, tears welling up in his eyes. He was sure they were disappointed in him, he himself sure was. “He kept telling me that if I ever felt uncomfortable to let him know, but I couldn’t stand up to him...! I couldn’t bring myself to tell him no!”

“That doesn’t make what he did okay.” Riza pointed out.

“Exactly,” Roy added. “He took advantage of you.”

“Edward, when this started... Who was it that initiated most of the physical contact...?” Riza asked.

“...Him...” Edward said in a low voice. “He would grope me and follow me into the bathroom a lot... I didn’t really know how to react to it at first, but I just kept letting him do it to me...”

“It’s perfectly normal for a kid your age to react that way to a situation like that. It doesn’t mean that anything is wrong with you. *This isn’t your fault.*” Riza repeated herself yet again, putting emphasis on it.

“And I’m telling you it is...!” Edward argued back.

“No, it’s not!” Both Riza and Roy said, in unison this time.

“When he first started touching me, I kept trying to tell myself that maybe I really did like him, just to rationalize it... But when he started getting more intimate, it became too much to handle and I...” Edward put his hand over the now bandaged cuts on his arm, clutching at it.

They knew what he was hinting at without him directly even saying it.

The dam inside of Roy snapped and the rage he’d been holding back consumed him. He started to silently walk towards the door.

“Colonel? Where are you going?” Riza inquired, a little worried about what Roy was planning to do.

“I’m going to kill him...” Roy muttered beneath his breath. At that moment, Riza knew fully well that Roy was not beyond it.

“Hold on, Colonel!” Riza shouted, catching up to him right before he made it to the door, stepping in from him and blocking his path.

“Get out of the way, Lieutenant.” Roy said threateningly.

“I won’t, sir.” Riza was undeterred.

“You expect me to just stand by, knowing that one of my subordinates, a child no less, was raped by some bastard who thinks he can do whatever the hell he pleases?!” Roy glared at her.

“That’s not what I’m saying!” Riza shot back, before looking down, frustration visible in her eyes. She clearly felt just as helpless about this whole situation as he did. “I know you’re angry... And I understand why... It infuriates me to know that one of our own soldiers has

been doing such a thing to him, but acting irrational isn't going to solve anything. Right now, our priority should be Edward alone or have you forgotten...?"

Roy saw the desperation in her usually stoic face. She was just as upset about this as he was, if not more so. She wanted to get back at Ian for this too, but she was clearly restraining herself.

"Please don't be mad at him..."

Roy and Riza looked over as they heard Edward.

"I don't want to get him in trouble. He genuinely believes I feel the same way as he feels. No matter how much pain it's caused me, I can't bring myself to deny him that much... I didn't want to hurt his feelings... That's why I could never tell him to stop, not even last night..."

Roy and Riza couldn't believe what they were hearing. It was like somebody gaining feelings of fondness for their abuser or stalker.

Stockholm Syndrome.

While it probably wasn't the exact same thing, Edward definitely seemed to be experiencing symptoms of it.

"Screw his feelings...!" Roy snapped at him. "He's manipulating *yours*!"

"I was the one manipulating *him*..." Edward muttered as Roy began approaching him again.

"Stop telling yourself that, Ed. You had no control over anything that *monster* did to you." Roy said, before grabbing his arm and holding it up. "And this is all the proof I need of that. From the first day he met you, you were nothing to him but a piece of meat to him. He's a

pedophile, Ed, can't you see that? You should have never had to be exposed to something like that at your age."

Edward was silent after that.

"Edward..." Riza said after a while. "I know it doesn't mean much, but I'm sorry... about what he did to you... and what he took from you... I would go back in time and stop it from happening if I could, but I swear that we will never allow it to happen again."

She placed a hand on his shoulder.

"And, no matter what you may think, this doesn't make you weak..." Riza assured him. "You had so much courage to talk about this with us. You're *strong*, Edward... Stronger than *I* am."

This implication gained a glance from Roy, but the man decided to not bring it up for the time being. (After all, the focus needed to be solely on Edward right now.)

It was in that moment that Edward's walls broke down at long last, the tears he had been holding back for months finally spilling out. Without thinking, he fell into her arms, sobbing into her chest and letting everything out.

Riza returned the embrace, almost like she was his mother, allowing the boy get everything out. He'd clearly been holding back for far too long.

Roy reached out, briefly placing a hand on his back, giving one of his rare attempts at comfort.

"...I know this is probably not the right time to say this, and it may not seem like it with the situation as it is, but everything *will* be okay... So keep your head up, Fullmetal..."

He started to walk off, but then briefly added:

“And take however much time you need.”

...

A/N: I hope y'all like it... Please tell me what you think. I kind of like it as a one shot, as that's what it was started as, but I may still yet make a sequel for Ed and Al to talk things out.

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